

I Claim:

1. A bar code identification stencil for uniquely identifying a plurality of articles, said stencil comprising:  
a carrier strip for carrying an identification code; and  
an identification code carried by said carrier strip, said identification code being formed of a plurality of spaced a part markers of generally elongated shape formed in said carrier strip, said markers forming a machine readable bar code which is unique for each of said plurality of articles to be identified.
2. A bar code identification stencil according to claim 1, wherein said carrier strip is generally rectangular in shape.
3. A bar code identification stencil according to claim 1, wherein said carrier strip is generally uniform in thickness.
4. A bar code identification stencil according to claim 1, wherein each of said markers are generally parallel to each other.
5. A bar code identification stencil according to claim 4, wherein each of said markers are generally of the same length.
6. A bar code identification stencil according to claim 1, wherein each of said markers is formed by a depression in said carrier strip.
7. A bar code identification stencil according to claim 1, wherein each of said markers is formed by a cutout in said carrier strip.

8. A bar code identification stencil according to claim 7, wherein each of said cutouts extends fully through said carrier strip.

9. A bar code identification stencil according to claim 1, wherein said carrier strip is generally flexible in order to conform to the shape of an article being identified by said identification stencil.

10. A bar code identification stencil according to claim 1, wherein said carrier strip is made from a fibre reinforced material with a bind agent for containing said fibre reinforced material.

11. A bar code identification stencil according to claim 1, wherein said carrier strip is made from a material which can withstand a temperature of at least 3,500 degrees F without being damaged to the point that said identification stencil is no longer useful for its intended purpose.

12. A bar code identification stencil according to claim 1, wherein said carrier strip is made from a material which can withstand a pressure of at least 5,000 PSI without being damaged to the point that said identification stencil is no longer useful for its intended purpose.

13. A bar code identification stencil according to claim 1, wherein said carrier strip is made from a material which can withstand a vacuum of at least 30 inches of mercury without being

damaged to the point that said identification stencil is no longer useful for its intended purpose.

14. A bar code identification stencil according to claim 1, wherein said identification code is formed of a plurality of identification code elements and wherein said carrier strip includes a plurality of identification code element locations, said markers being formed at selected ones of said element locations.

15. A bar code identification stencil according to claim 14, wherein the presence or absence of a said marker at a said element location forms a unique identification code for said identification stencil.

16. A bar code identification stencil according to claim 1 further comprising an attachment element for attaching said identification stencil to an article to be identified by said identification stencil.

17. A bar code identification stencil according to claim 16, wherein said attachment element includes an adhesive tape.

18. A bar code identification stencil according to claim 16, wherein said attachment element includes a double-back adhesive tape with a first side of said adhesive tape adhered to said carrier strip and a second side of said adhesive tape adhered to a release liner.

19. A bar code identification stencil according to claim 1,

wherein said carrier strip is adapted to be attached to an interior surface of a cast used to cast the article to be identified by said identification stencil using an attachment material.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein said carrier strip further includes a barrier layer for preventing said attachment material from coming into contact with said carrier strip.

21. A bar code identification stencil according to claim 1, wherein said carrier strip is adapted to be attached to an interior surface of a mold used to mold the article to be identified by said identification stencil using an attachment material.

22. A bar code identification stencil according to claim 6, wherein said carrier strip includes runner and gate depressions through which a molding material can be supplied to fill said marker depressions during an injection molding process.

23. A bar code identification stencil according to claim 22, wherein said gate depression is formed along one edge of said carrier strip.

24. A bar code identification stencil according to claim 23, wherein said gate depression is connected to said runner depression.

25. A bar code identification stencil according to claim 24, wherein said runner depression is connected to each of said marker depressions.

26. A bar code identification stencil according to claim 25, wherein at least one end of said marker depressions terminate in an opening at an edge of said carrier strip.

27. A bar code identification stencil according to claim 6, wherein said carrier strip further includes human readable symbols which correspond to said identification code.

28. A bar code identification stencil according to claim 27, wherein said human readable symbols are formed as depressions in said carrier strip.

29. A bar code identification stencil according to claim 28, wherein said runner depression is connected to each of said symbol depressions.

30. A bar code identification stencil according to claim 29, wherein an edge of each of said symbol depressions forms an opening at an edge of said carrier strip.

31. A method for uniquely identifying a plurality of cast articles using a machine readable bar code number integrally cast into said article during the casting process, said method comprising the steps of:

providing a bar code identification stencil having a carrier strip which carries an identification code, said identification code being formed of a plurality of spaced a part voids and being unique for each of said plurality of articles to be identified;

attaching said stencil to an interior surface of the cast used to cast said articles;

filling said cast with casting material to cast said article and to fill said voids to thereby form said bar code number; and using a different said stencil for each of said plurality articles to be cast.

32. The method of claim 31, wherein said carrier strip includes an attachment element for attaching said identification stencil to said interior surface of said cast.

33. The method of claim 32, wherein said carrier strip is adapted to be attached to said interior surface of said cast using an attachment material.

34. The method of claim 33, wherein said carrier strip further includes a barrier layer for preventing said attachment material from coming into contact with said carrier strip.

35. A method for uniquely identifying a plurality of molded articles using a machine readable bar code number integrally molded into said article during the molding process, said method comprising the steps of:

providing a bar code identification stencil having a carrier strip which carries an identification code, said identification code being formed of a plurality of spaced a part voids and being unique for each of said plurality of articles to be identified;

attaching said stencil to an interior surface of the mold used to mold said articles;

filling said mold with molding material to mold said article and to fill said voids to thereby form said bar code number; and using a different said stencil for each of said plurality of articles to be molded.